

Atrial Fibrillation Improving detection

Start and end dates of work covered by case study

October 2009 – February 2010

Lead organisation and joint partners

Wandsworth CCG (Wandle Practices Commissioning Group)

Key points at a glance

- The project increased AF detection through opportunistic manual pulse checks through the annual flu vaccination campaign.
- 27 new cases of AF detected along with 125 newly coded cases.

Background Summary

Wandsworth CCG recognised AF as a major risk factor for stroke which left untreated, puts patients at high risk of premature death and disability. Within London, the recorded AF prevalence of 0.95% is 0.68% lower than England average and 1.45% lower than expected UK rate with 15% practice level variation (QOF 2015).

Within Wandsworth CCG, based on national prevalence, it is expected that 4,917 of patients will have AF, however the QOF reported cases in 2013/2014 were 2,652, a difference of 2,265 patients potentially undiagnosed. This highlighted a need to improve case finding and detection strategies within the CCG to reduce the risks of stroke in this patient group.

NICE guidance (2006) highlights the opportunistic pulse checks provides an opportunity to improve AF detection rates. Capturing a large patient cohort through the annual flu vaccination scheme could facilitate early diagnosis of AF and therefore reduce the risk of AF associated strokes.

Work undertaken

Project Plan: To improve detection of AF in primary care through promoting opportunistic pulse checks thereby reducing the incidence of AF related stroke.

Aim:

- To screen patients over 65 years of age who present in general practice (mainly through annual flu vaccination campaign) for AF, through manual pulse palpation.

Outcomes

Wandsworth CCG (October 2009 – February 2010): 23/25 practices participated.

- For each patient screened, the practice was remunerated £2.
- A total of 6828 patient were screened (45% of over 65s) at a cost of £13,656
- 410 patients were identified to have an irregular pulse (6% of those screened)
- 27 new cases of AF were detected as a result of screening.
- An increase in AF prevalence of 0.67% was reported during the project period.
- 125 additional patients with existing AF were coded during the project

Plans for the future

The project highlighted a cost effective way to provide early diagnosis of AF through opportunistic AF screening to a large patient cohort. Wandsworth CCG are considering expanding the program to more areas and repeating the programme annually.

Tips for success

- Identifying at risk populations through programmes such as annual flu vaccination, allows access to a large patient cohort and improved AF detection in a primary care setting.

Contact for further information

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